

Questions About Where the Downfall of Pagan Rome is Outlined in Revelation

By Pastor Ed Anderson

Where in the Book of Revelation is the downfall of Pagan Rome outlined?

Answer:

The **downfall of Pagan Rome** in the *Historicist interpretation*—as supported by writers like **Ellen White** and **Uriah Smith**—is outlined primarily in the **early chapters of Revelation**, particularly in:

Revelation Chapters 6, 8, 9, and 12–13

Here's how it breaks down according to **Historicist expositors**:

1. Revelation 6:1–8 — The Four Horsemen

Context: The first four seals

- **White Horse:** Apostolic purity and gospel spread (early church)
- **Red Horse:** Rising persecution (Roman violence against Christians)
- **Black Horse:** Compromise and doctrinal corruption (transition from Pagan to Papal)
- **Pale Horse:** Decline and death — linked to the **decay of Pagan Rome**

Uriah Smith and *Ellen White* view these horsemen as a prophetic sketch of the Roman Empire's history—starting with **Imperial Rome's power** and ending in its **decline and collapse**.

2. Revelation 8:7–13 — First Four Trumpets

These trumpets symbolically **describe the fall of Pagan Rome** through barbarian invasions:

1. **1st Trumpet** (Rev. 8:7) — Alaric the Goths
2. **2nd Trumpet** (Rev. 8:8–9) — Genseric and the Vandals
3. **3rd Trumpet** (Rev. 8:10–11) — Attila the Hun

4. **4th Trumpet** (Rev. 8:12) — Odoacer and the final dissolution of the Western Roman Empire

These are interpreted as divine judgments leading to the **fall of the Western Roman Empire (476 A.D.)**.

Uriah Smith, in *Daniel and the Revelation*, traces each trumpet to historical invasions that led to **the collapse of Pagan Rome**.

3. Revelation 9:1–12 — 5th Trumpet: Islamic Expansion

- The rise of **Islam** and the judgment upon the **Eastern Roman Empire (Byzantium)**
- Interpreted as a **judgment on the remnants of Rome**, continuing God's punishment on the imperial legacy

4. Revelation 12:3–5 — The Great Red Dragon

“A great red dragon having seven heads and ten horns...”

- Historicists see the **dragon as Pagan Rome** attempting to kill Jesus (v.4).
- The dragon represents **Satan working through Pagan Rome**, particularly Herod and the Roman empire during Christ's time.
- When the dragon is cast down (v.9), this symbolizes the **transition from Pagan Rome to Papal Rome**.

Ellen White comments in *The Great Controversy*, p. 438:

“The dragon is said to be Satan; he it was that moved upon Herod to put the Saviour to death. But the chief agent of Satan in making war upon Christ and His people during the first centuries of the Christian era was the Roman Empire, in which paganism was the prevailing religion.”

5. Revelation 13:1–2 — Beast from the Sea

“And the dragon gave him his power, and his seat, and great authority.”

- Pagan Rome (the dragon) **gives its authority to Papal Rome** (the sea beast)
- Fulfillment: The **Bishop of Rome receives political power**, especially after **476 A.D.**, when the Roman Empire collapses

Summary of Key Chapters/Verses on Pagan Rome's Fall (Historicist View):

Revelation Passage	Event	Interpretation
Rev. 6:1–8	Four Horsemen	Stages of early church under Roman rule
Rev. 8:7–13	Trumpets 1–4	Barbarian invasions → Fall of Western Rome
Rev. 9:1–12	5th Trumpet	Islamic scourge on Eastern Rome
Rev. 12:3–5	Red Dragon	Pagan Rome opposing Christ
Rev. 13:1–2	Beast from Sea	Pagan Rome hands power to Papal Rome